



Families4Guard

Issue 4

December 2011

Welcome to the **"Families4Guard"** **The Mississippi Army** **National Guard Newsletter**



STATE FAMILY PROGRAM

Family Programs would like to extend a warm welcome to COL Sam Massey as the Director of Outreach Services. COL Massey brings 35 years of MSNG experience to this directorate and will provide an extensive amount of wealth and knowledge to the department.

As the holidays are fast approaching, there are some points I would like to remind you of during the holiday season. Security of your personal information has to be a priority during your shopping adventures. Please be careful if you use credit cards, debit cards or checks with social security numbers. There are people who are looking to exploit

this type of information for personal gains.

Another point that is near and dear to everyone is traveling during the holidays. As you know the highways and byways will have increased motor vehicle traffic for the next 45 days. Please be aware of yourself and other drivers.

To the Guard Family: I would like to wish everyone a very safe Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you next year.

State Family Director
MAJ James A. Clark,
james.andrew.clark@us.army.mil
601-313-6379



Our MilitaryOneSource representative is
Marshay Lawson
Phone: 601-874-4641 or
MarshayLawson@militaryonesource.com
Military OneSource is provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to active duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status) and their families. Military OneSource offers free, 24/7 access to a confidential resource and referral support for service members and their families in order to improve the quality of their lives and the effectiveness of the military community. It is a virtual extension of installation services. Visit Military OneSource today at www.militaryonesource.com or call 1-800-342-9647.



STATE FAMILY READINESS

Commanders, Soldiers, and Family members have sometimes treated Family Readiness as something to be dealt with the day of the mobilization ceremony. Some of us treat readiness like showing up to a race with little training or preparation. Just as a Soldier cannot prepare for deployment on the day they leave, or an athlete run a good race without training; a family cannot prepare for deployment or separation while the buses are pulling out from the armory. Some readiness issues include personal finance, legal issues, TRICARE, managing separation, child care planning, and spouse employment. With increased focus on Family Readiness and maintaining a healthy mind, body and soul, we take the focus off of the worrying and empower the Family Members to work with matters under control which allows the Warrior to stay focused on the mission. If you participate with your FRG – Congratulations and Thank You! If you don't currently participate, we invite you to become involved in our MS National Guard Family. To become involved, with a Family Readiness Staff Member to provide additional support, resources and training to volunteers, your unit and your Family Readiness Group. For more information you may also contact your State Family Readiness Program office. Olevia Jane Lyon, Family Readiness Assistant, (FRA) MPSC-Contractor 601-313-6766 or olevia.lyon@us.army.mil

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER (FAC)

Family Assistance Centers throughout the state are here to provide help and support to Service Members and their families in times of need. Family Assistance Center Supervisors (FAC's) are provided to simplify the process of accessing needed services and support for Military Families. The primary mission of a FAC's, which includes assistance regardless of deployment status as well as monthly proactive contact to each Family during deployment, is to inform and emotionally support Families so Service Members can perform their mission. The FAC Toll Free number is 1(888)-288-4898.

FAC CENTERS

Blenda Gann	CP Shelby
Janice Smith	CP Shelby
Sumer Works	CP Shelby
Betty Lambert	CP Shelby
Johnnie Kimbrough	Starkville
Laurie Landry	St. Martin
Cliff Olson	Senatobia
Ricky Posey	Meridian
Bill Shack	Tupelo
Tootsie North	Jackson

Paul Purser, FAC Coordinator
Jackson, MS
601-313-6502

FAC PHONE NUMBERS

Blenda Gann	601-558-2405
Sumer Works	601-558-2884
Betty Lambert	228-392-9195
Laurie Landry	228-392-9195
Cliff Olson	662-562-6920
Ricky Posey	601-553-3195
Bill Shack	662-891-9754
Tootsie North	601-313-6501



BEST HOT CHOCOLATE MIX

The secret ingredient in this mix is the mini chocolate chips, which melt when combined with the boiling water and give the cocoa an extra-rich flavor. The recipe makes enough for four gift-size portions, each of which can be measured into a small plastic bag and tucked into a cup or mug filled with mini marshmallows, candy stick stirrers, and a spoon. Wrap each filled gift cup in cellophane and don't forget to include a tag with the following instructions: "Spoon 3 or 4 generous tablespoons of cocoa mix into your cup (depending on the size), add boiling water, and stir well."

Ingredients

- 2 cups nonfat dry milk powder
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1/2 cup mini semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup powdered nondairy creamer
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Instructions

1. Measure all of the ingredients into a mixing bowl and whisk them until they are evenly blended.
2. Store the mix in a tightly covered container at room temperature until you're ready to package it. Makes about 4 cups of mix.



STRONG BONDS

Strong Bonds – Couples

Retreat: Strong Bonds programs are offered by Army Chaplains with the full support of your Commanding Officer. You'll gain practical, useful information based on world-class curriculum developed from years of research. In small groups, you'll participate in activities that renew bonds with your peers. And, as a couple, you'll practice communication and relationship building skills, as well as share intimate moments. The Strong Bonds Couples weekend retreat is designed to strengthen relationships, to inspire hope and rekindle marriages — even start the journey of healing for relationships under fire. **Due to budget cuts there will be a change in ITO's this year.** Upcoming dates for Strong Bonds retreats to be determined for 2012.

Tentative Schedule is:

Coming Soon in February



ESGR

Representative:

Jackie Sharp

601-313-6508

jackie.d.sharp@us.army.mil



**American
Red Cross**

Together, we can save a life

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

The Red Cross is actively involved in Family Programs. Currently The American Red Cross is pleased to provide FREE or discounted certification classes to military family members, their children, and veterans. Certification offers a variety of benefits to include: Lifesaving skills, job skills/resume boosters, college application builders and more. In most cases, certification courses include any combination of: Adult/Child/Infant CPR, Basic First Aid, Babysitting, Blood Borne Pathogens, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Some chapters even provide Lifeguard Training and Nurse Assistant Training. For motivation on why you should obtain this training, visit: www.redcross.org and look at the "Get Trained" Section and the videos posted on "Prepare for a Safe Summer".

MILITARY FAMILY LIFE CONSULTANTS

(MFLC's)

Are there Family concerns or Family issues that need to be addressed? We have MFLC's to help you with your problems.

Military Family Life Consultant:

Youth and Children

Kerry Johnson

601-497-3128

kerryv.c.johnson@healthnet.com

Adults

Kyseta Warner-Armstrong

601-850-0417

kyseta.x.warner.armstrong@healthnet.com



FINANCIAL FITNESS

Are you ready to get financially fit? Willie McGriggs our Military Family Life Consultant, is a new member of the JFSAP team and is here to assist you in reaching your financial goals. He can team up with you and help you identify your dreams, create a plan tailored to those dreams, and track your progress along the way. Whatever challenge you're facing, such as debt management, or investment and retirement planning, Willie is your financial coach. Call him today at 601-214-5230, for a confidential financial review.

Financial Planner

Willie McGriggs

601-214-5230

williemcgriggs@aol.com

YOUTH!



STATE YOUTH COORDINATOR (SYC)

allen.pope@us.army.mil
601-313-6765

jan.reeves@us.army.mil
601-313-6620



“There’s more to Christmas than candlelight and cheer. It’s the spirit of sweet friendship that brightens all year. Its thoughtfulness and kindness, its hope reborn again, for peace, for understanding, and for goodwill to men!”

* What are you giving this Christmas?

Christmas is not just about receiving presents under a tree. It’s about giving love and kindness to your family, friends, and even people you may not know. So give cheer to everyone this year!

Happy Holidays



Merry Christmas



OUR MILITARY KIDS

Our Military Kids provides substantial support in the form of grants to the children of National Guard and Military Reserve personnel who are currently deployed overseas, as well as the children of Wounded Warriors in all branches. The grants from Our Military Kids pay for participation in sports, fine arts, camps, and tutoring programs that nurture and sustain children while a parent is away in service to our country or recovering from injury.

Email address:

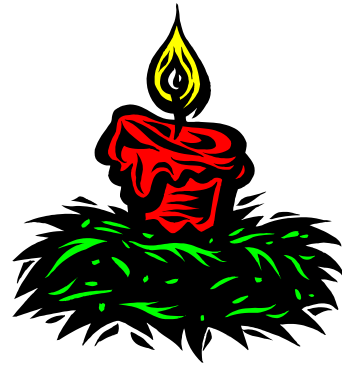
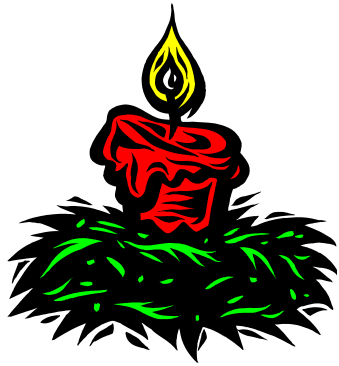
OMKInquiry@ourmilitarykids.org

Phone: (703) 734-6654, or toll free
(866) 691-6654

Fax: (703) 734-6503

Address:

Our Military Kids, Inc.
6861 Elm Street, Suite 2A
McLean, VA 22101



For some people, Christmas can be one of the loneliest times of the year. You may feel depressed, sad, or angry because of problems at home or at school. You don't have to cope with your emotions by yourself! You are NOT alone! If you would like to talk with someone about any issues or problems you may be experiencing you can call MilitaryOneSource at 601-874-4641 or 1800-342-9647 or the Military Family Life Consultant at 601-497-3128.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

HOW EARLY SHOULD I SEND A HOLIDAY PACKAGE OVERSEAS?



Letters/Cards/Priority Mail:

Dec. 3

* Parcel Airlift Mail:

Dec. 1

* Space Available Mail:

Nov. 26

* Parcel Post:

Nov. 12

**For mail addressed
from all shore FPOs
(except 093):**

* Express Mail Military Service:

Dec. 17

* First-Class Mail (Letters/cards, priority mail):

Dec. 10

* Parcel Airlift Mail:

Dec. 3

* Space Available Mail: **Nov. 26**

HOLIDAY MAIL FOR HEROES:

Holiday mail for heroes can be mailed to the following address:

**Holiday Mail For Heroes
P O Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456**

Ensure all cards are signed

Use generic salutations **“Dear
Service Member.”**

Cards addressed to specific individuals **CANNOT** be delivered through this program.

Only cards are being accepted.

DO NOT send letters

DO NOT include email or home addresses on the cards, as the program is not meant to foster pen pal relationships.

DO NOT include **inserts of any kind**, including photos, as these items will be removed during the reviewing process.

Participants should limit the number of cards they to **25** from any one person or **50** from any one class or group. If you are mailing a large quantity, please bundle the cards and place them in large mailing envelopes. Each card does not need its own envelope, as envelopes will be removed from all cards before distribution.

Holiday Tips

December is a very hectic time so we are listing a few helpful holiday organizing tips to keep the Yuletide Stress at bay.

Holiday Organizing Tips:

Scale down the festivities. Plan a more low-key get-together with drinks.

Cheat on holiday cookies. Buy pre-made.

Cut down on holiday baking. Host a cookie exchange.

Put your guests to work. Host a tree-trimming party.

Save time, and paper. Send out personalized E-Cards.

Simplify your wrapping. Simple but elegant is the way to go.

Bake

Now's the time for your holiday baking bonanza. Bake all the cookies in one day, and freeze most of them without decoration. Those that we don't decorate right away let guests decorate at holiday meals, also the time to make pies, rolls and many breads. Most baked goods—cakes, breads, pies, muffins, cookies—freeze just fine. The exceptions: meringues, crumb toppings and baked goods that include large pieces of fruit or dairy filling (so avoid profiteroles). Cheesecake freezes well, and cookie dough can usually be frozen for anywhere from 6 weeks to 3 months.